



## Montana Nurses Association

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RE: SB 205

**The incidence of injury resulting from violent acts is more than twice the incidence for health care workers, compared to other workers. (Bureau of Labor 2005)**

The incidence of violence is likely far greater than that which is reported. Victims may not report the assault because they fear isolation, embarrassment, and reprisal.

Healthcare providers and first responders must care for victims and patients in crisis situations. They must get close and touch people; sometimes those people attack.

Many of the perpetrators are intoxicated from alcohol and/or drugs, suffering from withdrawal from drugs and/or seeking narcotics or other prescription drugs, coping poorly with illness, or suffering from a mental illness. This bill provides referral of the perpetrator to appropriate treatment.

Montana statute provides for additional consequences for assault on law enforcement officials and sports officials. Healthcare providers and first responders have similar exposure and similar risk.

We believe that this bill will provide a deterrent for assault, and encourage treatment for perpetrators to help prevent recurrence.

We believe that this bill will encourage victims to report this crime. Victims will then be able to access services to facilitate recovery from physical and emotional trauma.

We believe that healthcare providers and emergency responders who suffer significant assault may leave these professions in fear. This bill will make workplaces safer for the people we depend on to save our lives.

Montana Nurses Association

Robert Allen, Executive Director